

A L A M E N T A T I O N

63.

A Tender Bowels of Love OVER THEE, OH ENGLAND: That thou mayst return to the Lord in Humility, and Seek him, yet while he may be Found.

OH! *England, England*, How is my Heart Rent, and my Bowels Concern'd at the sight of thy impending and approaching Misery and Calamity! which, without unfeigned Repentance and hearty Contrition, (for all the Abominations which are daily committed within thy Borders, by the greatest part of thy Inhabitants) will certainly work and effect by utter Ruine and Destruction, and make thee a Reproach and By-word to them who are round about thee. *Oh! That my Head were full of Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears*, that I might thoroughly Bemoan thy distressed State and Condition, as now it appears, and hath a good while appeared before me.

The Lord God of Heaven and Earth, in Infinite Loving kindness and tender Mercy Vifited thee, the Earliest of the Nations of the Earth (in these last Days,) with the Glorious Beams and Rayes of the Rising Sun of his Righteousness, even when thou wast in Darkness, and under the Region and shadow of Death: And I yet live as a Witness for him, that when thou laidst polluted in thy own Blood, and wast not, Salted, nor Swaddled at all; he had Compassion upon thee, above many Nations, and said unto thee, Live; and offered his Word, to be to thee an Everlasting Covenant, of Life, Light, and Glory, and Raised many Living Witnesses to publish his will and mind, in order to gather thy Inhabitants, of all States and Conditions, under the wing of his Power, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings; and his good purpose was to Incompass you all within the Wall of his Salvation, and have made you one Sheep fold; under the Instruction and Government of one Shepherd, who would have led you every Day into Green Pastures, by the Rivers of Living Water, and that you might thereby have been Nourished up to Eternal Life, and have gone no more forth.

But Oh! How have the far greater part of you, Slighted, Neglected, and miserably Undervallued, the Exceeding Riches of this Grace, offered you in a day acceptable; wherein you might have seen, and known, the things which belonged to your Temporal and Eternal Peace, Happiness and Tranquillity, and might have been a Nation and People saved by the Lord; who would have made your Enemies as Ashes under the Soles of your Feet.

He hath long waited to be thus Gracious unto you, and his poor despised Servants and Messengers, have not ceased to warn you early and late, to embrace his Mercy, and so avoid his Wrath and hot Displeasure. But you have turned a deaf Ear, and hardened your Hearts, against all those Reproofs of Instruction, which would have been to you a way of Life; Had they been Received, Imbraced and Entertained, in that Love and Mercy in which they were sent, you had Certainly and Experimentally known, in this your day, the thing which belong to your Temporal and Eternal Peace, which now is very near to be hid from your Eyes; the God of Mercy give you Repentance of all your ungodly deeds, and hard speeches, against his Name and Glory: *My Bowels yearn towards you once more*, that you may imbrace and kiss the Son of the Fathers Love, (who is standing at the Door of your Houses (i. e.) your Hearts, and daily inviting you to let him have entrance there) Left he be angry, and ye perish from the way of Life and Peace; he will not always wait to be thus Gracious to you, nor his Spirit always thus Strive with you, but will smite the hairy Scalp of every one who goes on in Iniquity; for Holiness is the way to God's Kingdom, without which none shall ever see him to their Eternal Comfort, this is the Word of the Lord, to you all, Great and Small; therefore cast off all unholiness and unrighteousness whatsoever, and that speedily, if ye intend to enter into the Kingdom of Glory, for it stands in Righteousness and Holiness, and no unrighteous or unholy Man or Woman shall ever enter therein.

Oh! Therefore, *wash ye, make ye clean*, the Fountain is now open and free, without Money or Price, put far from you the evil of your doings, and that speedily, for God is pure, and will have his People so; you must cease to do Evil, before you can learn to do Well; it is not your Lip-service, nor Bodily-exercise that will profit you any thing; if you had it every Day, that you are to Live; for God will not be served with Sinners, neither doth he hear their Prayers, John. 9. 31. *Tea their Sacrifices are an Abomination in his sight; but if any Man, or People, be Worshipers of him in Truth, and do his will; him and them he heareth and answereth; for he is a Spirit, and they who truly Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and Truth*, and the Songs of your outward Temples must be turned into Howling; if ever you come to see him whom you have pierced, by your ungodly Deeds; he hath Recorded your Sinns, as with a Pen of Iron, and the point of a Diamond, in the Book of your Consciences, out of which both Quick and Dead must be Judged at the last Day.

Oh! *England, England*, let the time pass, which thou hast spent in the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the pride of Life; be sufficient, for the Days are now Evil, and the times Perrillous, and Eminently Dangerous, and Distress and Anguish is taking hold of People, and Nations, that if possible they may repent and amend their Lives, and turn unto the Lord our God that he may have Mercy upon them: This is my fervent desire for thee, Oh! thou Land of my Nativity, that thou mayest escape the Stroke of his divine Vengeance, which will fall grievously upon the Head of the Wicked, and on every one who wilfully goes on in Iniquity.

Oh! The Pride, Drunkenness, Gluttony, Whoring, Lying, Swearing, Killing and Stealing, &c. that abounds in this Land! And profaneness from it is gone out into other Nations and Islands afar off, so that the very Heathen have Blasphemed the name of God through you, and have blessed their Idols, beyond the true and Living God, because of the Evil and Corrupt Fruits which they have seen brought forth by you, who profess in Words to know and worship him, by whom all things were made and Created. The Lord of the Vineyard is now come to look for Fruits; and every Tree that bringeth not good Fruits of Righteousness, and true Holiness, he will hew down and cast into the Fire. Every Plant which his Right Hand hath not Planted, he will pluck up and cast into the Furnace of Fire, where is weeping and gnashing of Teeth for ever. Let their profession of him and his holy name and power be what it will; for true Christianity (and all in it who are truly Baptized into Christ) stands in and by that Faith which purifies the Heart and In-

side, of all his Living Members, and he is not a Christian who only appears so in name and shew, neither is that Baptism which only washes the outside; but he is a Christian, who is one Inward; and the true and saving Baptism, is that which sprinkles the Heart and washes the Conscience, from all uncleanness. This is of and by the Spirit of Truth, such are true Christians indeed, whose praise is not of Men but of God.

Oh! *England*, Consider how far are the greatest part of thy Inhabitants from this Baptism; the Lord in Mercy, open your Eyes, and give you a sight and sence of it, that if possible in this your Day, you may know the thing that belongs to your Peace and Prosperity, for the time will come in which it will be hid from your Eyes, if you do not repent and turn to the Lord with all your Hearts, that he may have mercy upon you, and save you out of the Hand of your Enemies.

The Lord hath long waited to be Gracious and Merciful to you, and would not that you should Dye in your Sins, nor Perish in your Iniquities; but you have despised his Mercy, and set at nought all his Reproofs: Nourishing your Corrupt Lusts, as in a day of slaughter, and making merry over his just and living Witness in your Hearts, which would bring you to brokenness of Heart and Contrition of Mind, and would have wrought that Repentance in you, which you needed not to have Repented of, which is, from dead works, to Serve and Fear the Living God.

The Cause of the present misery and distress that the Land lies under, is the unrighteousness thereof, of almost all sorts and kinds: What Abomination was in Sodom, that is not committed in this Land? Oh! how is the Righteous Seed which God hath Sown in your Hearts oppressed every Day with your ungodly Deeds! The cry thereof hath entered the Ear of the Almighty; If he whet his Glittering Sword, and his Hand take hold on Judgment, He will execute Vengeance upon his Enemies, and Fury upon his Adversaries.

There is a Remnant whom the Lord hath Called out from amongst you, and a few of that Remnant whom he hath chosen to place his name in, who are Faithful to him, and have kept the Word of his Patience, and he hath kept them in the hour of Temptation through many Trials and Exercises in which the Angel of his Divine Power and Presence hath upheld them, that they Fainted not, till it pleased God to open the Hearts of the Government, to give them some Ease, for which they are thankful; yet have they not wholly set free the oppressed, but have left the Priests heavy Yoke of Tithes upon our Necks still, and other Burthens, the Lord open their Eyes to see it, that all the Branches (with the Body and Root) of the See of Rome, may be cut off in England, then shall she enjoy Peace and Plenty, and Prosperity shall possess her Pallaces; my Soul hungers after her good, more than my daily Food.

We are not Concern'd in any Controversie or War with Flesh and Blood; firmly believing the true Gospel Ministration ends all Destruction of Mankind, by Sword or Spear, according to the Testimony of that Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Micah. 4. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. So that Nation shall not Lift up a Sword against Nation, neither shall they Learn War any more, but every one shall sit under his own Vine, and none shall make them afraid.*

This is one great Mark of the Restoration of the Kingdom of Christ; and his Rule and Government in the Hearts and Consciences of his People, that the Weapons of their Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual, and only bent against Wickedness, &c. This, a Remnant in our Day, the Lord hath made Witnesses of, who desire nothing more of any Worldly Government; than to Live a peaceable and quiet Life under them in all Godliness and Honesty: And have often made Intercession to the Lord for them, according to the Exhortation of the Great Apostle Paul, *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3.*

And now, Oh *England*, the way to be preserved from all those Calamities, which now Extremely threaten thy Inhabitants, is to Return unto the Lord, with all thy Heart by unfeigned Repentance, which is no less then the Casting off every unfruitful Work of Darkness, and ceasing from every Evil Word, Thought, and Deed, then mayst thou acceptably serve the Lord, and have an answer of Peace from him.

And if thy ways thus please the Lord, he will make all thy Enemies at Peace with thee, for it is Righteousness that Exalteth a Nation over the Heads of all its Adversaries, and bringeth lasting and sure Peace within its Borders: Therefore let the unrighteous forsake his way, and the ungodly his thoughts. *Wash ye, make ye Clean, put away the Evil of your doings, from before the Eye of the Almighty, seek Judgment, Relieve the Oppressed, and answer the Lords Requirings in these things*, then will he answer you in time of Distress, and make your Enemies as Ashes under your Feet; for he will manifest his own Righteousness in the Nations, in Judgment and Mercy, for the Earth is now filled with Violence, and all Flesh hath Corrupted its way before the Lord, and the Earth begun to lose his accustomed Seasons, and the Air its wonted Seasonableness, and the Displeasure of the Lord (to all whose Eyes are open) seems apparently to manifest it self; so that Fear and Amazement takes hold upon many, whose Hands now are upon their Loins, as a Woman in Travail, because of the Judgments of the great God of Heaven, which now are in the Earth.

Oh! God of Righteousness, open the Eyes of this Sinful Nation, to see the spiritual appearance and coming of thy dear Son, that they perish not, from the way of Life and Peace; Incite their hearts to Receive him whom thou art Manifesting in *Angels Flesh* to Reprove and Condemn Sin in the Flesh, that thy Righteousness may be Revealed in them from Faith to Faith, and the Salvation brought about them as a Wall and Bulwark; and their Enemies Scattered as Stubble before the Wind. Amen.

But if you still harden your Hearts and stiffen your Necks against the Reproofs of that Heavenly Instructor whom the Lord hath sent to your Doors, and go on in Rebellion against him, and the many warnings which he hath long given you by the Mouths of many Witnesses; who have not loved their Lives for your good, the Lord will let his Face against you for Evil and not for Good, and you shall wither as untimely Figs, or Grains that grows upon a House top, and your Glory he will Stain, and bring you into Contempt. I could not be clear, but in the Love of God, and Bowls of his Son, to write this unto you.

Who am your assured Friend, Ambrose Rigge.

Reigate in Surrey the 11th of the 5th Month, 1696.